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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, IO/HR (NEVILLE, OSTERMEIER);
DRL/MLGA(SIBILLA); S/SRMC

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [BG](#) [PHUM](#) [SA](#) [UNGA](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: OIC DG ON "DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS" RESOLUTION:
SEES LITTLE PROSPECT OF POSTPONEMENT BUT THINKS THERE IS
ROOM FOR COMPROMISE

REF: A. JEDDAH 0415
[B](#). STATE 111466
[C](#). STATE 109397

Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In meeting over lunch today (October 29), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Director General for Cultural and Social Affairs Ambassador Hemayet Uddin (protect) expressed the opinion that the OIC states would not/not agree to postponement since passage currently looks highly promising from their point of view. Well understanding the American and EU perspectives as well as the core principle of free speech involved, through his long residence in the U.S. himself (daughter is Amcit), he clearly stated there remained room for compromise. He noted that Pakistan is a driving force behind the resolution, both in Geneva and in New York (ref A).

[1](#)2. (C) An urbane career diplomat, former Bangladesh Foreign Secretary, Ambassador to India, and ca. 1991-97 DCM Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, Hemayet Uddin will complete a 3-year post-retirement stint at the OIC in January 2010. Although he appears not to be personally close to OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, he was asked to accompany the SYG to Dhaka on November 2. Familiar with American practice of religious tolerance, Hemayet remarked that "as paradoxical as it sounds only in the U.S. can one learn to become a good Muslim." He noted that his Muslim in-laws in Frederick, Maryland, perform Friday prayers at a local church, observing that such a situation is unimaginable anywhere else in the world.

[1](#)3. (U) Today's Arab News (Jeddah/October 29) carried the OIC's defense of the resolution, noting that SYG Ihsanoglu said (BEGIN TEXT) the OIC position on defamation of religions was based on existing international covenants which have outlined limits to freedom of opinion and expression in cases of incitement to hatred on religious grounds. He added that for the last 10 years OIC-sponsored resolutions on the defamation of religion have been passed by the General Assembly in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

[1](#)4. (U) (CONT.) The text of these resolutions has evolved over the years and, in its current form, is not restricted to Islam but denounces the defamation of all religions, he said. "It is important to note that passage of these resolutions by a majority vote beyond the membership of the OIC lends international legitimacy to the OIC position on this issue," Ihsanoglu said. "It is, however, clear that there is a

divergence of opinion on this issue as indicated by Michael Posner's statement. On our part, we are looking at the positive side encouraged by the recognition on both sides of the need to address the issue of discrimination and incitement to hatred on religious grounds," he added.

¶5. (U) (CONT.) "I believe that the assistant secretary of state was referring to the recent consensual passage of the US and Egypt-sponsored resolution on the freedom of opinion and expression by consensus at the Human Rights Council in Geneva," said Ihsanoglu. (END TEXT)

¶6. (SBU) Post will continue to monitor and report. CG and Poloff will accompany Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith in a call on SYG Ihsanoglu, Sunday morning, November 1.
QUINN